

Appl. No. 10/528,207
Reply to Office Action of 12/18/2006

Attorney Docket No. 11138-018

II. Amendments to the Drawings

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Figures 5-9 and replaces prior sheet numbers 3/4 and 4/4. Specifically, the legend "Prior Art" has been added to these figures.

- 5 -



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Appl. No. 10/528,207
Reply to Office Action of 12/18/2006

Attorney Docket No. 11138-018

IV. Remarks

Reconsideration and re-examination of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is herein respectfully requested.

After entering this amendment, claims 1-7 remain pending.

Drawing Amendments

Figures 5-9 of the drawings have been amended by adding the legend "Prior Art".

Abstract Amendments

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the abstract for exceeding the 150 word limitation. A new abstract conforming to the 150 word limitation has been submitted. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1, 2 and 5 have been amended to particularly point out the subject matter the applicant regards as the invention, rendering the claims definite. Accordingly, it is believed that this rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

- 7 -



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Appl. No. 10/528,207
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Attorney Docket No. 11138-018

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,240,290 to Kim ("Kim"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Regarding claim 1 and as noted by the Examiner, Kim discloses an adapter assembly for branching off of a tubular pipe 80 having a convex external surface. See *Kim* at col. 1, lines 59-67 and Fig. 1. The adapter assembly includes a fitting member 40 (the Examiner's "intermediate ring") configured to seal between the pipe 80 and a threaded elongated member 60. See *id.* at col. 4, lines 6-14 and Fig. 1. The fitting member 40 includes a *concave* front end 41 for mating with the curvature of the main pipe 80. See *id.* at col. 5, lines 40 - 46. From this, it is submitted that Kim at least fails to disclose an intermediate ring having a second *planar* annular portion facing away from an actuating shoulder of a screw-in part.

Kim also discloses an aperture 50A axially extending completely through the elongated member 60 in fluid communication with an interior of the pipe 80. See *id.* at col. 4, lines 19-25 and Fig. 4. External threads 53B are provided to threadably engage, for example, a control valve 70. *Id.* at col. 4, lines 67-68, col. 5, lines 1-2 and Fig. 1. From this it is submitted that Kim also fails to disclose a screw-in part having a through-opening for *plugging in* a plug part.

For at least the above reasons, the rejection based thereon should be accordingly withdrawn.

Regarding claims 2 - 7, which depend from claim 1, the above arguments apply equally to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

- 8 -



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Appl. No. 10/528,207
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Attorney Docket No. 11138-018

Therefore, for at least the above reasons it is submitted that the rejections based thereon should be accordingly withdrawn.

In addition, regarding claim 5, Kim also discloses the adapter assembly 60 having an insertion part 51 defining an externally threaded cylinder 54 for engaging the pipe 80 and openings 55A – 55D in fluid communication with the aperture 50A. *Id.* at col. 4, lines 26-27, lines 40 – 44, and Fig. 1. From this, it is submitted that Kim fails to disclose a *plug holding element* mounted on the screw-in part. The rejection based thereon should be accordingly withdrawn.

Claims 1-4, 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,212,796 to Neuschotz ("Neuschotz"). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

As noted by the Examiner, Neuschotz discloses a threaded element 12 (the Examiner's "intermediate ring") having external threads 22 for engaging internal screw threads 13 in a carrier part 10. *See Neuschotz* at col. 2, lines 40-41 and Figs. 1, 2 and 4. The "intermediate ring" 12 also has internal threads 20 to engage external threads 21 on a fitting 13' (the Examiner's "screw-in part"). *See id.* at col. 2, lines 33-36 and Fig. 4. From this, it is submitted that Neuschotz fails to disclose a screw-in part having an externally threaded portion configured for screwing into a threaded bore of a *base part*. As noted above, Neuschotz only discloses the "screw-in part" 13' screwing into the "intermediate ring" 12, not into the carrier part 10.

In addition, a first annular seal ring 30 is disposed between the "intermediate ring" 12 and a surface 29 of the carrier part 10. *See id.* at col. 2,

- 9 -

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Appl. No. 10/528,207
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Attorney Docket No. 11138-018

lines 62-65 and Fig. 4. A second seal ring 44 is disposed between the "screw-in part" 13' and *inner* surfaces 31 and 32 of the "intermediate ring" 12. See *id.* at col. 4, lines 6-10 and Fig. 4. From this, it is submitted that Neuschotz fails to disclose the intermediate ring defining a second sealing chamber for a second sealing ring formed between a second sealing ring seat, a surrounding surface adjacent a threaded bore of a base part, and an *externally threaded portion of the screw-in part*.

For at least the above reasons, the rejection based thereon should be accordingly withdrawn.

Regarding claims 2 - 4, 6 and 7, which depend from claim 1, the above arguments apply equally to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference. Therefore, for at least the above reasons it is submitted that the rejections based thereon should be accordingly withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3 and 5-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,027,144 to Hagen ("Hagen") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,904,355 to Creamer ("Creamer"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Regarding claim 1, Hagen individually and when combined with Creamer, fails to disclose or suggest the features lacking in Hagen, namely an axially *rigid* intermediate ring being adapted to fit onto an externally threaded portion of a screw-in part. As conceded by the examiner, Hagen fails to disclose the *axially rigid* intermediate ring. On the other hand, Creamer discloses either a *deformable*

- 10 -



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Appl. No. 10/528,207
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Attorney Docket No. 11138-018

flange member 20, or a *deformable* washer 34 or 40 as part of a sealing means permitting a body, such as a valve, to be *rotated to a proper orientation* while maintaining a seal. See *Creamer*, col. 1, lines 38-44, col. 3, lines 55-57, col. 4, lines 29-34 and 52-58 and Figs. 2, 4, and 6. From this it is respectfully submitted that *Creamer* fails to disclose an *axially rigid* intermediate ring as claimed in the present invention. In addition, Hagen discloses an insert part 2b (the Examiner's "screw-in part") threaded into a base part 2a. *Hagen* at col. 6, lines 47-58. Nowhere does Hagen disclose any particular orientation of the insert part 2b with respect to the base part 2a. See generally *id* at cols. 1-8. From this, it is respectfully submitted that there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the deformable washer permitting the body to be rotated to a proper orientation of *Creamer* with the insert part 2b of Hagen.

Since *Creamer* fails to disclose or suggest the axially rigid intermediate ring, which was previously noted as being absent in Hagen, and since there is no suggestion or motivation to combine these references, it must be concluded that Hagen in view of *Creamer* cannot render the claims of the present application as obvious. The rejection under § 103 is therefore improper and should be withdrawn.

Regarding claims 2, 3 and 5 - 7, which depend from claim 1, the above arguments apply equally to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference. Therefore, for at least the above reasons it is submitted that the rejection under § 103 is therefore improper and should be withdrawn.

- 11 -



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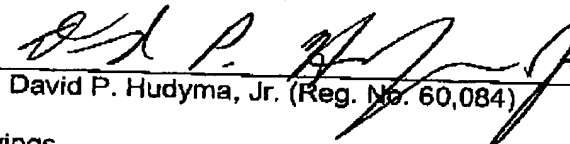
Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

3/14/07

Date


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Attachments: 2 Sheets Replacement Drawings

SLO/DPH/sc

- 12 -



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